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Modern Materialism.

A

DISCOURSE

AT THE

ORDINATION OF MR. CHARLES LOWE,

AS ASSOCIATE PASTOR

OVER THE

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL SOCIETY,

NEW BEDFORD, JULY 23, 1852.

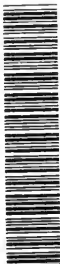
BY JOHN WEISS.

New Bedford :

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DISCOURSE.

I. COR. XV. 46.

NOW BE IT THAT WAS NOT FIRST WHICH IS SPIRITUAL, BUT THAT WHICH IS NATURAL; AND AFTERWARD THAT WHICH IS SPIRITUAL.

For several years new facts from the domain of science have been crowding upon us, much faster than they can be either interpreted or classified. From their uncomfortable tyranny some persons take refuge in disbelief: for even to the best minds nothing is so aggravating as a fact which does not appear to connect itself with knowledge as hitherto developed and explained. They cannot rest till they either deny it or reduce it to a system. If they do not love investigation enough to tarry for its lingering results, they do the former: but if they are willing to wait till Nature shows them how she absorbs and civilizes this strange fact, it is through much unhappiness and trial of their faith. But the majority of people are intoxicated by a physical discovery, and reel unsteadily into an interpretation that is more marvellous and repelling than the thing to be explained. Especially if the new fact spring from

the human organization, so that it falls into the hands of many persons of little culture and with no habits of investigation, we may expect to hear it used to subvert not only established beliefs, but its own real significance. The heat of the moment is unfavorable to a display of its legitimate tendency. Among these strange and costly facts, people act like a mob which has broken into a cathedral, carrying the broad haste of revolution among things which should only be touched by quiet and priestly fingers. Over their soiled and dishevelled attire they haul the holy vestments; they toss about the symbols; they drink their coarse liquor out of consecrated cups; they take revenge upon the sacred splendors for having excited their surprise, and unconsciously stifle reverence in sport. Their whole behavior is a misinterpretation of things which have definite and salutary uses.

All these facts, connected with the human brain, involving its past history, its present organization, and its unexpected capacities, suffer under a twofold misinterpretation. Some of them support a regularly systematized materialism, others nourish a mis-called spiritualism, which will sink into a most hopeless materialism, when science strips from its facts the supernatural mask, and reduces them to the physical order; indifference to the laws of spirit will succeed to this imitation of spiritual agency. But the general result of both of these misinterpretations will be the same. The relation of man to nature

and to God will be mystified, disturbed, degraded. The reverence, the independent power, the sustained existence of a human soul will be lost amid the rubbish of these theories. The faculties which open toward the invisible world, and which gain their nourishment by a genuine influx according to spiritual rules, will shrivel and sink away from their proper light and air. And man will be left, an animal with the highest type of brain, which throbs or ceases, according as the subtle element rises or falls within its organs. The words of love and beauty need be uttered no longer; there is no independent soul to rise and enjoy a brief ransom in the act of prayer. These popular degrading tendencies demand our close attention. We must contribute something towards the construction of a final answer to this widely spread materialism, and the spiritual laws which connect the soul with an invisible sphere must be proclaimed and proved.

It is obvious that the form of a sermon involves great disadvantages when we proceed to state the physical basis for the new kind of materialism. The facts are not yet so generally accepted that people will be content merely with an exposure of the false interpretations that are forced upon them. Therefore in attempting to discriminate so far as to receive unusual facts, but to deny the system which they are used to support, a sermon must appear to be guilty of bold and unwarranted generalizations, or else swell into a treatise, and defeat the religious object

peculiar to its form. It seems to me that it is as important to acknowledge the facts as it is to deny the use that is made of them; for they fill many a chasm in our scientific knowledge, and their legitimate uses promise to increase our welfare. But my present object is not chiefly to discuss their value. At the risk of seeming to take for granted some things that do not yet enter into courses of popular instruction, and some that still divide the judgment of scientific investigators, the sermon must briefly state the physical arguments of the materialist, without proofs or illustrations; he, at least, accepts all the facts, and more. It is easy to make a sweeping denial of both his facts and his conclusions; but more fatal to him to accept, if possible, the stubborn facts. We proceed, then, to indicate the grounds which support the modern forms of materialism.

The human brain can be traced from its first rudiments, among the earliest animals, gaining new organs at each step, and becoming more complicated, as fresh and complex circumstances surrounded it.*

* Some materialists accept the theory of the spontaneous development of the successive forms of life from an impulse which resided in the original germ, which, they suppose, was left to complete its history without any subsequent interference of the creative power. Others accept the authentic doctrine of science, that every new form of life was due to a special creative act, while the great idea, so far from being dislocated, carried its unity through these gradual improvements: so that the past appears as a single project of the Creator maintained by successive epochs, and binding together all the animal types, not by leaving the last to evolve the next, but by stringing each separately upon the logic of one unchanging thought. These differing views, however, do not affect the discussion; since the facts of animal development, upon

It seems clear that the human brain is a chronicle of the successive development of animal life. Its organs, from the lowest upward, mark the stages which animate existence has occupied its passage by gradual improvement up to the climax of man. Each new organ has been added out of deference to a new circumstance. Through the countless ages which pioneered the earth to its present state, there existed a nice conformity between physical conditions and nervous or cerebral development. As the species of animals succeeded each other, each one was a faithful representation of the kind of earth and climate which surrounded it: for inanimate and animate nature moved in two parallel lines, all of whose points exactly corresponded. The additions made by Nature to the brain which she seemed to be engaged in constructing, neither exceeded nor fell short of her own circumstances. The nervous cord, and afterwards the brain, under its different animal names, always found itself at home: and as nature proceeded, she promoted the brain to a new organ to preserve the harmony. This progress was so definite that it still can be traced, and the various orders of animals which now live confirm this gradual and tentative process of nature in her construction of the human brain. Each species has its organs—each

the false interpretation of which all materialists unite, are sufficiently countenanced by the real theory to serve their purpose. Therefore it is sufficient if we accept them upon their proper grounds, though we propose to reject the material result which they are forced to favor.

organ belongs to an animal state—each addition corresponds to an improvement: and all of this past history is taken up by the human brain, and rehearsed from base to forehead, with just so much of a supplement as man would need to harmonize with the latest conditions of nature. Such, divested of its appropriate demonstration, is the brain's history; and it furnishes the materialist with the first principle of his argument. If, he says, the present complex state of the brain has resulted from a gradual accumulation of its organs, each of which has been added according as natural circumstances called for a fresh faculty, at what point in the line can you introduce an independent human soul? Provident nature has added to the animal kingdom new faculties, one after another: and these faculties are repeated by man. If the animals can exercise the organs which develop these faculties, without an independent spiritual essence, why is it necessary to presume such in man, for the same organs? And if such be the case up to the point where human life commences, why introduce at that point the superfluity of a soul to animate the few additional organs bestowed on man? The life of God, dispersed through the channels of nature, has been sufficient to produce these wonderful refinements of animal life, till at last the human organization has raised these natural faculties to their highest power. The same life of God in nature is just as competent to take the last step, as to take any or all of the preceeding steps, without the expense

of creating individual souls. At no point in the series have the facts of the case demanded such an interpolation. Such is the basis of modern materialism. We substantially admit its facts, and for many reasons are rejoiced to possess them; but we have cause for objecting to the interpretation which they receive.

Upon this basis the materialist takes up his second position, and proceeds to ask what difference, except in degree, there is between man and the animals which rank next to him in intelligence and varied capacity. And his argument becomes more subtle and bewildering at every step. Lately, researches in the animal kingdom have been rewarded by facts whose tendency is to diminish the traditional difference presumed by man between his own powers and those which animals exercise. It is perceived that animals have the ability to adapt themselves to circumstances. Facts come to us, quite as well authenticated as any scientific facts which we are in the habit of receiving, to show that many animals are not limited to certain inexorable channels of instinct, binding them, like machines, to definite acts and products, but that they share man's independent capacity for accommodating himself to new conditions. They seem to be able to meet emergencies; they seem to have something which ekes out their instinct, and this is so marvellously like human reflection, that no man has yet been able to define the difference. This encroachment of the animal has been progressive; at

different times men have assumed different powers as the ones peculiar to themselves, but the observer of animal life has claimed them, one by one, and men have found their limits circumscribed. At first men supposed that animals were like children's playthings, regulated to a set performance, or like trees and flowers, partaking the unconscious life of nature. They expected a doll to show a tendency to accommodate itself to a child's caprices, as soon as an animal to bring any help to its regular instincts. But volumes are now filled with cases of clear experiment and combination among animals; in similar circumstances it would be said that man reflected; he would use the same organs which the brain of the animal possesses also, and the *quality* of the result in both cases would be the same. So man was compelled to fall back upon his more interior attributes. Animals possessed a capacity for experiment and adaptation, a power of using the organs of their brain in combination, a forethought that reached beyond their ordinary instincts; in short, they have been found in various emergencies acting so appropriately, that the quality of reflection upon external things could not be denied to them. But they have no memory—said man. Memory depends upon the subtle power of association, which is not limited by time and space. The perceptions of the brute are like the fragrance of flowers, exhaled daily and never recollected. Man is impressible, and the universal relation between all ideas can recal his impressions.

Whereupon brutes indicated to their friendly observers that it was possible for them to remember; man might call association a subtle power, if so, then the brute so far was subtle, for he could bridge gulfs of time with these fine aerial impressions, and rest them, with every occasion, upon piers of memory. And bewildered man recollected then that his sense of continuous existence resulted only from the power of memory; if so, a thread of continuity runs also through the lives of brutes. Of course, for the association of ideas displays itself through the association of the groups of organs in the brain; and these convolutions bear the same relation to each other in the higher animals as in man. The animal vindicated his claim to the qualities of reflection, memory, and continuity of existence. Then man, to establish his superiority to the animal, committed the satire of denying that it had passions: Whereupon arose a prompt vindication of revenge, jealousy, even envy, euriosity and ambition, and of late there seem to be reliable instances of the sense of shame among animals. Never before was it suspected that the brute had a consciousness of self. Those who make the latest claim that personal identity is the distinguishing faculty of man, are on the point of leaving this outpost for a less accessible position.*

* It is possible that observers have sometimes translated the actions of brutes into the language of their own fancy, and sometimes have projected what they wish to find upon what they really see. Animals are our elder Scripture: their obscure texts possibly suffer from the superfluous ingenuity

But the materialist has more than enough for the argument which he meditates. It is sufficient if he can show that some intelligent results of the animal brain are the same in quality as some intelligent results of the human brain. Observation may push the parallel farther, and bring other results into the same harmony. But the materialist deems that he is already sufficiently authorized to ask his question: if no independent mind is necessary to produce these qualities among animals, why is it necessary among men? Man has the perfected brain, and its results may vastly exceed in degree the results of the brains of animals, which occupy various positions on this road to the climax of man. But if the *quality* of the action is the same in both, why suppose that in one case it results merely from a brain, but in the other case from an independent soul? Either all brains which perform similar things are the instruments of independent minds, or none are. And the materialist permits us this alternative. We accept substantially

of commentators. When the poet marks the, "quick jerboa," planted above his hole like a note of admiration, scanning with immense surprise the intruders upon his solitude, he exclaims, "none such as he for a wonder!" From this fanciful burlesque there is but one step to the assertion of some enthusiastic observer that the capacity of marvellousness is anticipated by the jerboa's rough draught of himself and his whole class of credulous seekers. Animal types may be isolated human inclinations: their higher forms may prophecy faculties which we exercise in greater freedom only because we hold them in ampler combinations. But we are intoxicated by a bold comparison if we maintain that brutes and men are the reverse and obverse of the same medal. It is quite likely that more strict and unbiassed observations will diminish the extent of the parallel which it is now the fashion to construct, and pronounce counterfeit many supposed instances of animal humanity.

the curious facts which make his argument appear so strong : we rejoice to have them, because they are valuable in another direction. Even if it be discovered that many of them are the projections of lively human fancy upon the sphere of animal life, still enough remain, scientifically attested, to show an identity of quality between the operations of the animal and human brains. But the answer to the materialist is not affected by that admission.

He now proceeds to take up his third position with certain phenomena which belong to the mesmeric state. We refer to the excitement of the brain's organs at the will of the mesmerizer, and with no consciousness on the part of the subject. And he argues thus: if the human brain can be played upon as if its organs were like the keys of a piano—if two or more organs can be excited at once to produce a balance or combination of powers—and if, by exciting antagonistic organs, a struggle becomes apparent in which the larger organs win the field,—it follows that all mental manifestation depends upon the excitement of these organs in the natural or the mesmeric state, and that the relation of the organs creates and develops character, without volition and independent spirit. He proceeds to strengthen this argument by another class of facts,—those, namely, in which the operator impresses the mind of the subject contrary to the reality of things, making sweet appear to be bitter, a friend to be a stranger, an imaginary peril to be real,—in short, giving the will

no opportunity to rectify impressions which subvert all our regular perceptions. Could these results take place if an independent spirit stood behind the brain to endorse or reject the impressions which it transmitted ? *

Such are the positions of modern materialism. The interpretation which the facts have received de-

* It is more convenient to anticipate in a note the discussion of this point. All these phenomena depend upon a state in which the person cannot will to exercise the judging power : in other words, the mesmeric state holds the person subject to the influence of strong impressions, because it keeps the will neutral and unsuspecting. The person has no reason to suppose that he must adjust and test the impressions which the brain transmits. He believes and acts as men would if the power of trying their perceptions by an experienced judgment did not naturally belong to them. Even in the natural state people submit to impressions which are strong enough to suspend the judgment, until the spell lifts, and they resume their usual discriminations. The mesmeric state overcomes the whole mind with this submissiveness. The operator makes a mistake when he says that his subject "has no will," or that he affects the will at pleasure. Even when the senses are entirely suspended, his effect is produced merely through the usual organs of perception and reflection, while the subject is in a state that exaggerates his personal impressiveness. And it is noticeable that he cannot affect those whose total weight of experience and judgment is continually preponderating during his attempt. Such persons naturally escape the tyranny of all powerful impressions. The doctrine of a spirit distinct from the organization remains unimpeached by all these phenomena. Let their domain be extended, and their special usefulness established. It is just as likely that the mind, under mesmeric conditions, may be influenced *through* certain organs to *use* those organs, as under natural condition. In the natural state, the presentation of an object to a sense excites the mind to continue the use of that sense, with attention turned towards the sensuous impressions : mental impressions occupy the attention in the same manner. In the mesmeric state, mental impressions are transmitted according to the same laws, and their corresponding organs excited to a continuance. Sensor and motor nerves pass to and from each limb of the body : each cerebral organ also has its sensor and motor system. It would be as absurd to say that the finger, when affected, originates the brain, as that the brain originates the mind merely because its organs can transmit impressions in the mesmeric as well as natural state.

stroy the spiritual life of man: the brain limits his tenure of existence, its organs create his character and forestall his moral responsibility. The doctrine of the second birth becomes the lucky accident of a few men whose moral organs predominate: the purpose of life is simply to develop the resources of this planet, and men are the poor coral insects whose innumerable deaths uprear some final cause of God. Are these scientific facts, then, mere objects of our curiosity, and harmless diversions for the million? On the contrary, they subserve a terrible ocular deception, and the million lose their hope and resign their dignity as they perceive the imbecility of the old arguments amid these subtle novelties. If there be an object in preaching, and if the Christian Church perceive its lofty mission to develop the harmonies of God within the souls of men, and to educate them for God's ulterior purpose, the religious man must become an investigator, and furnish the dangerous half-knowledge of the age with its sublime interpretation. His own faith will not suffice, his own sentiments are not an answer: the invisible things of the spirit will not be accepted on the strength of his personal enthusiasm. The fine operations of his own brain will be cited to testify against the words of his mouth as he speaks of regeneration and the independent soul. The traditions of the Church may be grateful to those who are already convinced, or whom no facts disturb, but they do not rest in that line of argument which is essential to meet the present

emergency, to keep down these heady and tumultuous facts, and chain them to their oars. The religious man must become a student of the laws of God, if he would declare His whole counsel, and subordinate the freedom of these fervid times to the order and the great thoughts of the Creator. How vast this field lies before us: the importance of our present subject tempts us to coast its margin: perchance tokens of immortality scattered here to refute this domineering materialism may reward our search.

It need not trouble us at all that animals manifest the same mental quality with man. Let the fact be accepted. The fault is, we have not been ready to say that a brain has certain powers and tendencies of itself, without an individual spirit. We have been afraid lest in saying that we should prove too much by including the brains of men. We *wish* to include them to a limited extent, while beyond a certain line we could not venture if we would. All the phenomena of animal life, including every case of adaptation and experiment, result from the finite animal brain, and wherever they coincide with the quality of human action, they indicate that the human brain, so far, might operate as a finite brain, without an independent soul. This position is objectionable only in case that we have nothing else to say. But we need not fear to give a wide range to animal action: for to this finite capacity human nature annexes the invisible world of God. Look at the facts in every sphere of nature. You will find adaptation and ex-

periment from the fern to the oak ; you will see instinct reinforced by a power of accommodation from the polypus to the elephant. It makes no difference whether you say that God personally dwells in all these forms of life, or whether you say that God sustains the laws which secure their action. The point is this, that every thing is able to go a little beyond its inevitable and natural routine, if circumstances make it necessary. As the animal brain develops through the lower into the higher forms, this power of adaptation increases, till it reaches the qualities of reflection and memory. There is no point in the whole line where you find it necessary to introduce a soul ; the brain itself, like the oak and the plant, is adequate to meet its surrounding conditions. What matter is able to effect by means of the elements of nature under divine law, is represented by the animal brain, which is the most subtle material instrument. An animal's brain seeks food, and if necessary, it lays a plan to procure it : the same brain defends itself, and if needful, it uses caution, secrecy and artifice : it remembers where it procured water ; in the process of migration it accommodates itself to unexpected states of the earth and air : in the vicinity of man it develops more cunning than its wild life requires ; it imitates many human actions : the traits of the dog and the sagacity of the elephant show what a brain can do without a soul. Let these traits multiply and this sagacity become more striking, still the brain as the highest

form of nervous organization, would account for all. It belongs to this planet and has a conformity with it, as much as the shooting crystal and the growing tree. And it even has a consciousness of its own operations. To be conscious of what it is doing, the nerve of the polypus does not need a soul any more than the brain of the elephant: for consciousness is nothing but a state of action. Then let the animal do his best, and let us apply the words reflection, memory, consciousness, sagacity, to what he does, he still does nothing that a brain cannot do without a personal soul. The words we apply do not represent the peculiar characteristics of a soul; even the word reflection, though it enjoys an exaggerated value, is not inappropriate to express the cogitations of some observing animals. The human brain repeats these animal powers because it repeats the corresponding organs. Take away from man his additional organs and take away his soul, and the rest of his brain would perform its conscious functions as successfully as the highest animal's, since such is the brain's predestined quality. Now add the other organs to man's brain; have we not involved ourselves to the extent of admitting that they also could operate, in common with the rest of the brain, without a soul? No; because their action does not depend upon circumstances and external impressions. The whole power of the animal brain is consumed in an accommodation to earthly circumstances, relating to nature or to man. Furnish an elephant's brain with the organ

of ideality; he would trumpet no lyric without the ideals of the soul, for the circumstances of earth do not suggest them either to man or brute. Earth provides only the coloring and form. Plant causality in the forehead of the ape: he has imitation and the power of making experiments, for earth demands them. But the earth does not suggest the laws of logic either to man or brute; they are anterior forms of the human soul, and through causality they arrange the corresponding harmonies of creation. Causality uses the material furnished by the other organs, but it brings to them the primitive idea of unity, which the world does not begin to suggest till the soul has fettered its diversities, and made its changes repeat the name of the unchangeable. Find the men who stand next above the brute, and you find the primitive idea of God, which indeed is forced to use the poor material of the other organs to frame their conception of a God. The beast shudders at the presageful thunder, and cowers through the mysterious minutes of an eclipse; but an invisible idea is needed to bring the dignity of an invisible agency to human fear. And there is no man so low who does not cherish the idea of the continuity of his existence, though he is obliged to build his future state out of the scenery of earth: a sufficient proof in itself that earth has nothing to suggest the idea.* If the earth cannot furnish these

* The materialist declares that people imagine an ideal, and take the *want* for a proof that this ideal corresponds to some reality and deserves fulfilment.

conceptions, the addition of organs to the human brain cannot discover them, for the natural brain is conversant with things in the natural sphere. But suppose a soul, containing these ideas as part of its individual life and harmony, and you account for the addition of the organs and the stimulus with which they work. Behind the organs which man inherits from the animal, and which domesticate him on earth, there exist the immutable forms in which man classifies his knowledge and reduces to order his perceptions: also the laws of logic, which are pure forms of thought, and the idea of unity, and of causality. There exists too the consciousness of right and wrong, which cannot be the mere result of a proportion among the organs of the brain, because it is constantly referring to an invisible source of legislation. Besides, were right only a proportion and harmony of the brain, and wrong only a defect in certain organs, there would be a corresponding consciousness of pro-

But in his history of the brain he has already shown us that every organ corresponds to definite conditions, and that not one is created except to serve a practical necessity. Now accept for a moment his own scheme which makes mind and life to be the result of organization. Two organs of the brain, hope and ideality must concur for the composition of an idea of some future condition. But according to his assertion that the *want* of an ideal is mistaken for proof of a corresponding reality, these two organs are futile and superfluous. Why should the brain possess organs whose action is a deception, and whose promise never conducts to a reality? What is to be done with this abortive tendency, except finally to stifle it in the dust of the body's decay? As well might the organs which regulate the desire and choice of food be cheated of their corresponding nutriment. Therefore the crudeness of human ideals, and their continual doom of disappointment, so far from destroying belief in conceptions that are independent of the brain's untutored organs, corroborates their pre-existence.

portion or of defect, but not a consciousness of personal degradation, nor a sense of having violated something which should be served by better educated organs: something that mourns even when subjected to the brain's hereditary necessities. It is here that the personal soul displays its special independence of the organs which it uses: it cannot transcend their limits, nor entirely repair their deficiencies, but it continues to have a distinct consciousness of ideal goodness worthy to have better proportioned and more obedient organs. The brain may limit the responsibility, but cannot reduce the absolute principles of a human soul. If the principles did not exceed the responsibility, man's conscience would be rent by no regrets.

It is plain that this argument, based upon the ideas which are not the results of external impressions, might be wrought much further. Even if you can discern no physical difference between the brain of man and that of the highest animal, so that their convolutions, side by side, shall seem precisely to correspond, you have still the greater task to show that the primitive ideas, which make use of man's best organs, belong to the sphere of earth and are suggested by external perceptions. It is difficult to see how an empirical philosophy, which developes everything out of the inductive method, could answer modern materialism. To say that we are indebted to external hints from visible objects for the first knowledge which we have of the

law of unity, of cause and effect, and of the progressive method of creation, is the same as saying that the universe suggested to the Creator the laws which should regulate its construction. In other words, it is impossible for a created thing to discover the system of which it is a part, unless the central ideas and method of that system be confided to it in the shape of intuitions, which gradually discover how nature corresponds to them. The machine might as soon explain to other machines the intelligent combinations of the mechanic who created it. It certainly must be an axiom, to be accepted as the basis of this discussion, that creation cannot suggest to any parts of creation the previous laws of the Creator. If man establishes his science upon such laws, it is a proof that he is not only a part of creation, in the natural order, but also the member of a spiritual order, by virtue of which he has conceptions of the laws which made him. Otherwise we could find no more difference between an elephant and a Hottentot than between a Hottentot and a Newton: and we should either have to deny that modern science does follow the lines of God's laws, or else expect to overhear two acorns or two apes grow scientific about each other. But when we see daily how all created things hasten to fall in with the logic of the best thinkers and to crystalize along the lines which they draw, we know that such lines are drawn parallel with God's ideas, and that science is made in the image of the Creator.

If now the materialist repeats to you his history of the human brain, and the coincidences of animal sagacity, and asks you at what point along the whole line an independent soul can be interpolated, you can show him it is precisely at the point where the brain uses organs in correspondence with super-terrestrial ideas. Excepting those organs thus directed, the human brain itself is an animal brain, and endowed with no continuous existence: it carries the animal sagacities to their highest point, but the horizon of the planet cuts them off, and they find their beginning and their ending here. It might be shown how the presence of the super-terrestrial ideas affect and modify merely animal and perceptive organs. They raise the animal part of the human brain to a higher power, but without altering its instinctive character: and when they oppose its instinctive character, they speak in the language of the tempted apostle, to furnish another clear distinction that separates us from the brute. But this point would carry us too far. The hour of death divides the human soul from its animal inheritance, and it enters upon a new state with nothing in its essence that corresponds to the brain's temporalities; the rudiments of the spiritual body flow from the highest attributes which give to man his present distinction; animals are left behind—man, as a sagacious, experimenting, perceptive, combining animal, yields up his organs to the common clay: and the new body takes form around the independent intuitions, the laws of thought, the principles

of harmony and law. At death men lose all accidental relations, and meet each other on the ground of genuine affinities; and these affinities, as well as the distinctions of wit, the analogies of humor, and the creative combinations of ideality, have their root in the very structure and essence of the soul. What man leaves behind, however valuable and brilliant it may now seem, will be precisely that which the second state will find superfluous. As well import into that state the earth itself, as the faculties corresponding to the brain which earth constructed. There is a natural brain, and there will be a spiritual brain; the former shares the mortality of the body which it uses, and its gifts cannot pass into a state which has nothing to evolve their action.

It is proper to notice here a difficulty which is made by supposing that God has been engaged in creating upon earth forms that correspond to spiritual forms, and that exist necessarily because their ideas existed first. The Swedenborgian view, with its doctrine of things in heaven corresponding to things on earth, has strengthened this mystical idea of creation; so that now we frequently hear that animals exist because their types pre-exist in the divine mind; from this to a belief in the immortality of animals there is but a single step. But it does not seem to me that this idea of creation harmonizes with science. Creation has been gradual, and every step of it has been occupied with an imperfect form: it cannot be true that these forms have cor-

responded to spiritual ideas or forms. Is it not more just to represent the Creator as seeking to embody in the universe His ideal of spiritual existence, and that here He has given a human soul in its first state, with an appropriate environment? What then are all the forms which crowded previous ages, and whose fossils we sometimes see, but fragmentary models made and broken; what were they but the tentative efforts of the Creative Power on its road to the consummation of its ideal? Not necessary forms with spiritual correspondencies, but experimental forms faintly prophesying future excellencies, and with no corresponding realities in the mind of God to give them permanence, any more than the clumsy models have in the mind of the sculptor who makes and breaks them up, one after another, on the road to his first perfected group. Those monstrous creatures of the geological epochs were the first tossings up of the plastic material. What permanence could God confer, by His essential thought or by spiritual types, upon the natures of those extinct Saurians,—violations of beauty and eternal fitness: heaven never shuddered at their correspondencies, and the improving earth has huddled them into her recesses! And at what point, either in the life of past or present species, can these extempore devices, no longer subordinate to a chief conception, begin themselves to represent divine decrees? So far from believing that the dog and the elephant are reduced from essential forms which must forever pre-exist in

the Creator's mind, we might more safely imagine, with Genesis, that He says, "it repenteth me that I have made them." Compared with His ideal purpose they are abortive fragments, rough-casted, broken, recast, again rejected, refined upon, and slowly humanized in His great inspiration of the universe. As well concede continuous existence to the megatherium as to the faithful dog whom some half surmise will bear them company. As well expect to find in heaven correspondencies of the one as of the other. They were rough draughts of nature; they served God's uses in His gradual civilization of chaos; but as well expect to find in God the necessary type of chaos as of these chaotic fragments. Let them all crumble to the dust—let the bright animals enjoy their brief hour of prophecy, and let the earth resume so much of ourselves as earth excited. Continuous life and spiritual forms belong only to immutable ideas in which God sees His image. The states which yet lie before us undiscovered, and in which our higher functions already feel that they will have a ministry, will vindicate the patience of God's creative power, till at last we shall see all at once the true correspondence to these travailing epochs of creation, when we see the glorious manifestation of the Sons of God. Follow the steps of God's thought; permit His unfinished forms to sleep. Do not turn the second state into a museum of earth's monstrosities, or expect to travel thitherward with your menagerie. Let the dead past bury its dead

in its successive strata; and yield all the organs of the temporal man to the same unregretful oblivion. "They shall perish; but Thou remainest, and they all shall wax old as doth a garment: and as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed." But the heirs of the Spirit sigh for perfected forms.

The materialist calls upon man to lay aside his selfish hope of a continuous existence, and to be content to subserve the purposes of God as a finite instrument, preparing some new epoch, which shall be enacted upon a subdued and elaborated planet. Man, says he, is the perishable agent for this development and civilization of nature: and if, in this process, he also harmonizes the human faculties, so as to secure at last a preponderance to his moralities and decencies, he will live in sumptuous tranquillity, and add the furtherance of his goodness to the final cause of creation. Even though man is finite, he has every motive to obey his better impulses, till all the organs of the human brain sound a perfect chord, preluding the descent of some predestined New Jerusalem. Let man devote himself to God's future intention, though the dust of his brain drink up all his trembling emotions, and the costly shower sink into the still equilibrium of the grave. It is noble in man to ignore his personality, and like the dead limpet leave his habitation for the future uses of God. So speaks the materialist. We recognize that man reaches his true dignity when he consents to be the minister of God, but the facts of man and of nature forbid us to

enhance the dignity of his sacrifice by supposing his personal annihilation. We accept the statement of the materialist: man is the agent for the civilization of the earth and of himself. Out of that comes the moral argument to prove that man is not a finite instrument. For, let me ask, where can there be any improvement that will harmonize with the report which the soul makes of the moral nature of God, except the improvement of individual souls? The future reduction of Nature's elements to scientific use and play, though it fulfil all the earth's possible conditions and energies, will only furnish the landscape to the soul's first state. Zones of the earth subdued and fertilized will be her embossed girdles put on for the ovations of the human soul. The cunning artificer is merely adorned and accommodated with his work: the brightest moments of earth will only be her choice vintages yielded to his future festival of triumph. The soul will taste the elaborated drops, but its higher powers, refusing to be corrupted by the luxury, will find in their own improvement only a purpose worthy of the Creator. The whole creation groaneth and travaileth, waiting for the manifestation of the life of God in individual souls. What other species of improvement is worth the name? If human souls cease to exist, the whole object of successive generations is lost, unless we suppose that God, like an impassive artist, is amusing himself with the fine coloring of human sentiments and the world's granite of principles. To what end

do generations of men develope and improve—merely that God may compose His epic of a universe, by cantos of planets, enriching it with the culture of earth and the manifold hopes of man? That would not be an epic, but a heartless travesty of the sublime idea of individual improvement. It would be a great Egypt, dead, buried in sand, choked with the mummy-dust of its own developing Egyptians. In planet-scenery and animal life we perceive the play of infinite energies; but in the refinement of principles in individual souls we perceive the seriousness of God. Annihilate those souls, and creation becomes a miserable comedy: because spiritual improvement without spiritual permanence is an incongruity. The final purpose of God must be mixed up with the fortune of individual men, because they contain the permanence of heavenly principles: as soon sever the threads of universal gravitation, as destroy these moral immutabilities which roll around the centre of a God.

Notice too, what a surplus of activity is bestowed upon man. The higher organs manifest an exuberance which earth does not exhaust. The animal and perceptive organs are fairly matched with temporal conditions, and they have no ambition to exceed the exigencies of any given moment. But the powers which express the laws of thought, the divine harmonies, and the intuitive principles, spurn the earth in fierce energy, chafing at its limits, always outrunning the task for the day. Among them, there is

more outlay than is needed for the earth's improvement, or for their own adjustment with terrestrial conditions. What does the surplus mean? Animals have it not: they simply and precisely conform to their conditions: their reflections can only correspond to the stress of the moment. Call them out by forcible impressions, and they can attempt to rise to the level of your teachings: alter their conditions, or interfere with that average behavior which is called their instincts, and they can experiment to accommodate themselves to the emergency. But they never rise above it, nor anticipate a state of wider activities by an exuberance which overflows the present. Man, besides conforming to external impressions, comes furnished with primitive tendencies, like that, for instance, which inspires an artist with a plan but disgusts him with its fulfilment. The surplus of idea above his production demands satisfaction, but the human brain reports that earth has not colors tender enough, or marbles plastic enough to fix his thought. Fortunate, disappointed artist—if the sounds or colors of earth could contain his ideal, earth would be greater than himself, and the forms of his thought would be his grave. Weary with systematic failure, and fretted with the constant beat of this illimitable tide upon his brain, at last he turns his back upon the baffling material, and seeks new quarries of a more celestial flush. Earth never disappoints the brain of the animal: her care for the animal part of the human brain is motherly and

genial; but when her foster-child lets loose the riot of heaven amid the moderate economies of her mansion, and turns them into properties for his impossible dramas, her unsympathetic tolerance dismisses him to seek an ampler providence. It is as if the repulses of earth were intentioned to send the spirit out of her attraction, that it may be caught in the drift beyond.

It is obvious that many points, lying naturally in the direction of this argument, remain unnoticed; but they must defer to the services of this occasion. Such services are prompted by the expectation of our higher powers, that another state will call them to appropriate ministries and consume the excess for which earth has no employment. Nobler circumstances will interest faculties which the friendly but restricted earth cannot tempt to a hearty expression. The ordination consecrates invisible powers to the service of the thoughts of God. Its prayers have the voices of heralds: they seem to summon us to meet upon the boundary of earth, to contemplate the untried journey and commence the preparation of our powers. It is as if we stood for a moment at the point where death one day will leave us, to see for ourselves what faculties must be collected to make that little step across the line of the shadow. Our prayers anticipate, with faint resemblance, death's kindly office: they lift us a little, and we see

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with satisfaction another horizon enclosing fields that swarm with wonderful activities. My friend, let us think and speak to prepare and send forth more laborers unto that harvest. When all of us shall be gathered in those fields, whose limits are thoughts, and whose ripening air is love, may we find the invisible emotions of this day justified against all earth's deceptions and degrading courses.



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